Reclaiming Christ's Mission: A Biblical Reflection for Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church in Pittsburg, Kansas

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Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church have served as spiritual cornerstones in Pittsburg, Kansas, providing worship, community, and guidance for decades. However, amid their growth and evolving roles, there is a pressing need to revisit the core Biblical principles that define their mission. This reflection seeks to address the increasing perception that financial motivations may be overshadowing the churches' true calling—to serve, disciple, and embody Christ's love. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus, this paper encourages a return to values such as humility, servanthood, and genuine discipleship. By prioritizing spiritual impact over material success, these churches can restore their witness as beacons of light, guiding their congregations and community toward a deeper, more authentic expression of faith. The goal is to realign the churches with the Great Commission, focusing not on filling pews but on transforming lives through dedicated spiritual mentoring, outreach, and acts of service that reflect the heart of Christ.

Keywords: Covenant Harvest Church, Free Holiness Church, Pittsburg Kansas, Biblical principles, discipleship, humility, servanthood, financial motivations, Great Commission, community outreach, spiritual growth, generosity, church mission, Christian teachings, Christ's love.

Introduction

Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church have long been pillars within the Pittsburg, Kansas community, each offering a unique spiritual environment shaped by Pentecostal traditions. Covenant Harvest Church, known for its dynamic worship and community outreach, has grown from a small gathering in the late 1980s to a significant presence through its involvement in local and international church networks like Salt and Light and Coast to Coast. The church emphasizes making disciples, building the Church, and extending God's Kingdom, often through structured programs such as small groups, youth activities, and its affiliated school, Covenant Academy (Covenant Harvest).

Free Holiness Church, located at 5th and Fairview, is rooted in the Holiness Movement and is celebrated for its strong sense of community and commitment to spiritual growth. With a focus on promoting holiness and faith, the church offers its members a place of worship, prayer, and fellowship that seeks to reflect the teachings of Christ. Both churches have played significant roles in the spiritual life of Pittsburg, fostering community connections and providing support through various ministries and outreach efforts (Chamber of Commerce) (MapQuest).

However, in recent years, there have been observations and concerns among some members that financial motivations may be influencing the direction and priorities of these churches. From building expansions and program funding to an increased emphasis on financial contributions, these actions, while often necessary for church operations, can sometimes appear at odds with the core teachings of Jesus Christ. The Bible warns against the love of money and materialism, emphasizing that the church's primary focus should always be spiritual rather than financial (Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:10). This perceived shift in focus can cause members to question whether their churches are staying true to the Biblical call of humility, service, and selflessness.

The purpose of this paper is to address these concerns by revisiting the Biblical mission of the church. It seeks to remind Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church of their foundational calling to be communities of faith that prioritize spiritual growth over financial gain. Through an examination of key Biblical teachings, this paper encourages these churches to realign their missions with the values exemplified by Christ, fostering a renewed commitment to serve

God and the community in ways that honor His teachings. By refocusing on discipleship, genuine generosity, and a servant-hearted approach, these churches can ensure they remain true beacons of light in Pittsburg, embodying the love and grace that Christ intended for His church.

The Call to Humility and Servanthood in Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church

Christ's teachings on humility and servanthood serve as foundational principles for the Christian life and ministry. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus declares, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." This profound statement encapsulates the essence of Christian leadership—not one of authority and power but of selflessness, sacrifice, and a willingness to serve others. Jesus' life exemplified this calling as He consistently prioritized the needs of others, from washing the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-17) to healing the sick and reaching out to the marginalized. These acts were not just demonstrations of compassion but profound lessons in the kind of leadership Christ expects of His followers.

Reflection on How These Values Can Be Lived Out in Church Leadership and Culture

For Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church, embodying the values of humility and servanthood means more than performing acts of kindness; it requires a complete transformation in how leadership and congregational life are approached. Church leaders are called to model Christ-like servanthood by prioritizing the spiritual well-being of their members over institutional success or growth. This approach includes fostering a culture where every member is encouraged to serve one another, reflecting the Biblical principle that "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26).

In practical terms, this could mean reevaluating the leadership structures to ensure they facilitate servant leadership rather than hierarchical control. Leaders should be accessible, approachable, and willing to engage in the everyday challenges of their congregations. Instead of focusing on personal recognition or

authority, they should be the first to volunteer, support others, and model the humility that Christ exemplified.

For the broader congregational culture, these values can manifest in various ways. Encouraging members to participate in community service, supporting those in need, and prioritizing prayer and mutual encouragement over programs or financial campaigns can transform the church environment. By shifting the focus from what the church can gain to what it can give, these congregations can become powerful testimonies of Christ's love and humility.

Application: Encouraging Prioritization of Community Service and Spiritual Leadership Over Material or Expansionist Goals

To put these teachings into action, both Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can start by assessing their current priorities and initiatives. Are the church's programs and activities designed primarily to serve the community and foster spiritual growth, or do they lean toward expanding membership and financial stability? Leaders should consistently ask themselves how each decision aligns with the call to serve rather than be served.

Practical steps could include:

- **Community Outreach Programs:** Launch or enhance initiatives that directly serve the needs of the local community, such as food banks, support for the homeless, or visiting the elderly and sick. These programs should be driven by a genuine desire to help, not as means to attract new members.
- **Servant Leadership Training:** Implement training sessions for church leaders and volunteers that focus on Biblical servant leadership principles. Encourage leaders to lead by example, demonstrating humility in their interactions and decision-making processes.
- **Regular Reflection and Accountability:** Create spaces within the church for regular reflection on the church's mission and activities. This could be through prayer meetings, discussion groups, or accountability teams that ensure the church remains aligned with Christ's call to humility and service.
- **Reevaluating Financial Practices:** Consider how financial resources are being used. Are funds primarily directed toward community impact, or are

they disproportionately allocated to building expansions, technology upgrades, or marketing? Churches could reallocate resources to better reflect the priority of serving others.

- **Fostering a Culture of Generosity Without Pressure:** Encourage giving as an act of worship and personal conviction rather than as a duty or measure of commitment. Teach that generosity stems from a grateful heart and a desire to serve God's purposes, rather than fulfilling a financial target.

By embedding humility and servanthood into every aspect of church life, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can truly live out their calling as communities that reflect Christ's love and grace. In doing so, they will not only honor their spiritual heritage but also serve as beacons of hope and light in the Pittsburg community, fulfilling the mission that Christ set before all His followers.

Warnings Against Wealth and Materialism: A Direct Message to Pittsburg's Pentecostal Churches

The Bible provides clear and consistent warnings about the dangers of wealth and materialism, emphasizing that a focus on financial gain can lead believers away from their spiritual mission. Jesus stated in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." This verse highlights the incompatibility of pursuing wealth while trying to maintain a faithful commitment to God. Similarly, Paul warns in 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." These passages are powerful reminders that the pursuit of wealth can not only distract from one's spiritual journey but also cause spiritual harm.

Examination of Biblical Warnings About the Dangers of Wealth

The Bible's emphasis on the perils of wealth is not a condemnation of money itself but rather a caution against the love of money and the prioritization of material gain over spiritual values. Jesus often addressed this issue, knowing that wealth has a unique ability to capture the human heart and divert it from God. The rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22) is an example of how attachment to

wealth can prevent someone from fully following Christ. Jesus' response, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24), underscores the difficulty of maintaining spiritual integrity when wealth becomes a primary focus.

For churches like Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness, these warnings are particularly relevant. When financial considerations begin to influence decisions more than spiritual guidance, the mission of the church can become compromised. The prioritization of building projects, financial campaigns, or institutional growth over community service and discipleship reflects a subtle shift towards materialism, even when cloaked in the language of church expansion or improvement.

Discussion on How Financial Pursuits Can Distract from the Spiritual Mission

Both Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church have witnessed growth and change over the years, often accompanied by financial decisions that support their development. While managing resources is essential for any organization, it is crucial that financial pursuits do not overshadow the spiritual mission of the church. The allure of larger buildings, modern facilities, or expanded programs can sometimes lead churches to prioritize fundraising efforts, building campaigns, or revenue-generating activities over their core mission to serve, teach, and nurture faith.

This shift can inadvertently send a message to the congregation and the broader community that the church's success is measured in material terms rather than spiritual impact. For example, when sermons frequently emphasize giving, or when a disproportionate amount of church communications focuses on financial needs, it can create an atmosphere where members feel pressured to contribute monetarily, often overshadowing the true purpose of the church—to foster spiritual growth and communal support.

Furthermore, financial motivations can subtly influence the decision-making process within church leadership, prioritizing initiatives that generate income or enhance the church's physical presence over those that directly serve the spiritual needs of the congregation. This focus can detract from essential aspects of ministry, such as pastoral care, discipleship, prayer, and outreach to the needy,

which do not always offer visible or immediate financial returns but are central to the church's Biblical calling.

Application: Encouraging Transparency and Spiritual Accountability in Financial Decisions

To realign with Biblical principles, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can adopt several practical steps that promote financial transparency and spiritual accountability:

1. **Implementing Financial Transparency Practices**: Churches should maintain open and transparent communication about how funds are used. Regular financial reports, accessible to all members, can help build trust and ensure that resources are being directed toward the church's mission rather than excessive administrative or expansionist goals.
2. **Establishing Spiritual Oversight Committees**: Form committees or groups within the church responsible for reviewing major financial decisions through a spiritual lens. These groups can assess whether proposed financial activities align with the church's mission and Biblical values, ensuring that decisions are not solely driven by financial gain.
3. **Fostering a Culture of Stewardship, Not Fundraising**: Emphasize stewardship as a spiritual discipline, focusing on how resources—both financial and non-financial—can be used to glorify God and serve others. Encourage members to view their giving as an act of worship, not an obligation or means to fund institutional growth.
4. **Prioritizing Community-Focused Spending**: Reevaluate budget allocations to ensure a significant portion of funds is dedicated to community service, outreach, and supporting those in need. This approach not only reflects Christ's teachings but also reinforces the church's commitment to being a servant to its community.
5. **Educating Members on Biblical Financial Principles**: Offer workshops or Bible studies on Biblical financial management and generosity. Teaching congregants about the spiritual aspects of money can help create a healthier relationship with wealth within the church body, emphasizing the importance of serving God above all else.

By embracing these practices, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can safeguard their spiritual mission, ensuring that financial decisions are made in alignment with the teachings of Christ. This commitment to Biblical principles will help both churches remain true to their calling as places of worship, service, and spiritual guidance, free from the distractions and pitfalls of materialism.

Storing Treasures in Heaven: Realigning Church Priorities

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus provides a profound teaching on the nature of true wealth: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” This passage underscores a critical principle for Christian living: prioritizing spiritual and eternal values over earthly and material pursuits. For churches like Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness, this teaching offers a guiding principle that should shape their mission, activities, and resource allocation.

Jesus’ Instruction to Store Treasures in Heaven as a Guiding Principle

Jesus’ call to “store up treasures in heaven” is a direct challenge to the human tendency to value material success, security, and accumulation of wealth. In the context of the church, this teaching warns against the risk of allowing physical growth, financial goals, and institutional success to overshadow the church’s spiritual mission. Christ’s message is clear: the true treasure lies not in earthly accomplishments or assets but in the intangible, eternal impacts of living out God’s will—such as leading souls to Christ, nurturing spiritual growth, and extending compassion and service to those in need.

For Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church, this teaching should serve as a compass, redirecting focus away from physical expansion or financial prosperity and towards actions that reflect the heart of the Gospel. It calls these churches to evaluate their priorities, ensuring they are aligned with what Jesus values—faith, love, generosity, and service.

Evaluating Current Priorities in Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church

To ensure alignment with Christ's teaching, it's essential for both churches to critically evaluate their current activities and financial decisions. Questions to consider include:

- **Are church resources being used primarily to serve the spiritual needs of the congregation and community?** For example, are funds directed towards outreach programs, missions, and discipleship initiatives that build up the body of Christ?
- **Does the church prioritize community impact over institutional growth?** While building renovations, new technology, or expanded facilities may seem like steps forward, they should not come at the expense of spiritual programs that directly minister to people.
- **Are church communications and teachings emphasizing eternal values?** Churches need to assess whether their messages and activities are promoting a lifestyle of spiritual richness over material wealth, reinforcing the Biblical mandate to focus on heavenly treasures.
- **Is there transparency and accountability in financial matters?** Ensuring that members understand where resources are going and why helps build trust and keeps the church's mission focused on serving God rather than appearing financially driven.

Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness should reflect on whether their current trajectory aligns with these values, seeking to ensure that their actions demonstrate a commitment to storing treasures in heaven rather than accumulating earthly assets.

Application: Practical Steps for Focusing on Spiritual Impact Over Physical or Financial Growth

To bring these principles into practice, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can take several actionable steps:

1. **Reorient Financial Priorities Towards Ministry and Outreach**: Redirect funds from material enhancements to community service, missions, and spiritual growth programs. For example, instead of prioritizing a building

expansion, consider investing in local outreach, supporting the needy, or developing discipleship resources that enrich the spiritual lives of members.

2. **Promote a Culture of Generosity Without Pressure**: Encourage giving as a personal and spiritual act rather than a financial necessity. Communicate the importance of supporting God's work without creating a sense of obligation or competition. Emphasize that generosity is about the heart, reflecting God's love, and participating in His mission.
3. **Invest in People Over Projects**: Focus church efforts on nurturing the spiritual growth of members. Develop programs that foster Bible study, prayer, and community among members rather than concentrating resources on expensive projects that may not directly contribute to spiritual enrichment.
4. **Enhance Community Engagement and Service**: Commit to being a church that actively serves the community, embodying Christ's teachings. Volunteer programs, charity drives, and support for local families can all reflect the mission of storing treasures in heaven by meeting immediate needs and sharing God's love in tangible ways.
5. **Embrace a Mission-Centric Approach to Church Growth**: Rather than seeking growth for growth's sake, prioritize spiritual development, mentorship, and personal discipleship. Create spaces where members can deepen their faith and engage in meaningful ministry rather than just filling seats.
6. **Regular Spiritual Reflection and Realignment**: Conduct regular evaluations of church goals and activities to ensure they are spiritually focused. Hold leadership accountable for aligning decisions with Biblical teachings, encouraging an ongoing commitment to God's values rather than worldly measures of success.

By adopting these steps, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can ensure that their actions reflect a commitment to storing treasures in heaven, prioritizing spiritual growth, community service, and the eternal impact of their ministries. This focus not only honors Christ's teachings but also strengthens the church's witness as a true beacon of light in the Pittsburg community.

Generosity as Worship: Cultivating a Biblical Culture of Giving

Generosity, when framed as an act of worship, transcends mere financial contribution and becomes a reflection of a believer's relationship with God. The Bible emphasizes that giving should come from the heart, motivated by gratitude, love, and a desire to honor God rather than out of compulsion or obligation. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul writes, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." This verse encapsulates the spirit in which Christians are encouraged to give—freely, joyfully, and as an expression of their faith.

Biblical Perspective on Cheerful Giving as an Act of Worship

The concept of giving as worship is rooted in the understanding that everything we have comes from God, and our generosity is a way of acknowledging His provision and sovereignty. Throughout the Bible, acts of giving are closely tied to worship. In the Old Testament, tithes and offerings were brought to the temple as expressions of devotion, gratitude, and reverence for God's blessings (Malachi 3:10). In the New Testament, Jesus commended the widow who gave her last two coins as an example of pure and sacrificial generosity (Mark 12:41-44), highlighting that the heart behind the gift matters more than the amount given.

For churches like Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness, fostering a Biblical culture of giving means encouraging members to see their generosity as an integral part of their worship. It shifts the focus from meeting financial needs to deepening spiritual commitment. When giving is viewed as worship, it becomes an opportunity to express faith, trust, and love for God, drawing the giver closer to Him.

Addressing the Need for Genuine, Heartfelt Generosity Within the Churches

Both Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church have the opportunity to cultivate a culture of generosity that reflects the heart of Biblical teaching. This involves moving away from viewing giving as a transactional or obligatory act and instead fostering an environment where generosity is a joyful and voluntary expression of faith.

A common challenge in many churches is the pressure members may feel to give, especially when financial needs are highlighted frequently. While financial

support is necessary for maintaining church operations, the emphasis should always be on giving as a response to God's goodness rather than fulfilling a financial target. Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church can lead by example, demonstrating that generosity is about participating in God's work, whether through financial contributions, time, talents, or acts of service.

Encouraging genuine giving also means acknowledging and celebrating all forms of generosity, not just monetary ones. By recognizing volunteer efforts, acts of kindness, and other non-financial contributions, churches can reinforce the idea that generosity is a holistic expression of worship that goes beyond the offering plate.

Application: Promoting Giving That Supports the Church's Mission Without Emphasizing Financial Obligations

To cultivate a culture of joyful and heartfelt giving, Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church can implement several practical strategies that align with Biblical teachings:

1. **Teach the Theology of Generosity**: Regularly incorporate teachings on the Biblical principles of giving into sermons, Bible studies, and small groups. Highlight stories from Scripture that showcase joyful and sacrificial giving, such as the Macedonian churches who, despite their poverty, gave generously (2 Corinthians 8:1-4). This approach helps congregants understand that giving is an act of faith and worship.
2. **Celebrate All Forms of Generosity**: Acknowledge and celebrate acts of generosity in all forms—financial, time, talents, and service. Highlight stories within the congregation where members have given selflessly, encouraging others to see that generosity extends beyond financial contributions. By celebrating the diverse ways people can give, the church reinforces that everyone can participate in God's work.
3. **Focus on the Impact, Not the Obligation**: Shift the narrative from fundraising goals to stories of impact. Instead of emphasizing financial shortfalls or targets, share testimonies of how generosity has enabled ministry work, supported missions, or changed lives. This approach

connects giving to the church's mission and demonstrates the tangible outcomes of generosity, inspiring members to contribute joyfully.

4. **Encourage Personal Reflection on Giving**: Create opportunities for members to reflect on their giving as part of their spiritual journey. This could include guided prayers, workshops on personal stewardship, or journaling prompts that help individuals consider how their resources can be used to honor God. Encouraging personal reflection fosters a deeper connection between the giver and the act of giving.
5. **Provide Transparent Financial Communication**: Maintain transparency in how funds are used and how they support the church's mission. Regularly update the congregation on financial matters, but do so in a way that focuses on gratitude and God's provision rather than pressure. When members see how their giving directly impacts ministry, they are more likely to give from the heart.
6. **Create Opportunities for Service-Based Giving**: Expand the concept of giving beyond financial donations by creating service opportunities that allow members to contribute their time and skills. Volunteer-driven initiatives such as community outreach, support groups, or maintenance projects provide practical ways for members to engage in generosity as worship.
7. **Pray for God's Provision and Blessing**: Regularly pray for God's guidance and blessing over the church's finances, recognizing that He is the ultimate provider. Encourage members to seek God's will in their giving, trusting that He will meet the needs of the church as they remain faithful to His call.

By embracing these strategies, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can foster a culture of generosity that truly reflects Biblical principles. This approach not only aligns giving with worship but also strengthens the spiritual life of the church, creating a community where generosity flows naturally from hearts that are fully devoted to God.

Fulfilling the Great Commission: Making Disciples, Not Just Filling Pews

The Great Commission, as stated in Matthew 28:19-20, is the cornerstone of the church's mission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." This passage highlights Jesus' final instructions to His followers, emphasizing that the primary goal of the church is to make disciples—people who follow Jesus, learn from His teachings, and live out His commandments. This mission is not about building large congregations or expanding church memberships but about nurturing deep, transformative spiritual growth.

For Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church in Pittsburg, Kansas, this call to discipleship serves as a critical reminder to refocus on the true purpose of their ministries. It invites these churches to evaluate whether their activities, programs, and outreach efforts are effectively leading people to become devoted followers of Christ or merely aiming to increase attendance and fill the pews.

Emphasizing the Great Commission as the True Mission of Both Churches

The Great Commission is not just an evangelistic call but a comprehensive directive that includes teaching, mentoring, and equipping believers to live as Christ's disciples. The process of discipleship is lifelong, involving continuous learning, spiritual development, and growth in faith. For churches, this means that the ultimate measure of success is not the number of people attending services but the depth of spiritual maturity within the congregation.

Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church, like many modern churches, may face the temptation to focus on metrics that are easy to measure, such as attendance numbers, building size, or financial contributions. While these indicators can reflect certain aspects of church vitality, they do not capture the true essence of discipleship. A church's mission must go beyond attracting people; it must prioritize transforming lives through the Gospel.

Refocusing Efforts on Discipleship and Spiritual Mentoring

To realign with the Great Commission, Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church need to place a renewed emphasis on discipleship and spiritual mentoring. This shift involves a conscious effort to prioritize deep, meaningful

connections over superficial growth and to foster environments where members can explore their faith, ask questions, and grow spiritually.

1. **Personal Relationships Over Programs**: Discipleship is deeply relational. It thrives on personal connections where experienced believers walk alongside newer ones, offering guidance, encouragement, and accountability. Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness can refocus by encouraging these personal mentoring relationships, where seasoned Christians invest in the lives of others, modeling what it means to follow Christ.
2. **Teaching That Goes Beyond Sunday Services**: While Sunday sermons are important, true discipleship involves ongoing learning. Churches can enhance discipleship by offering Bible studies, workshops, and classes that delve deeper into the Scriptures and Christian living. Programs that emphasize practical application of Biblical principles help members integrate their faith into their daily lives, making their spiritual journey active and personal.
3. **Creating Opportunities for Spiritual Mentorship**: Both churches can develop mentorship programs that connect newer or younger believers with more mature Christians. This approach fosters one-on-one discipleship relationships that are essential for personal growth. Mentors can provide support, answer questions, and guide mentees in understanding and applying Biblical truths.

Application: Strategies for Enhancing Discipleship Programs and Prioritizing Spiritual Growth Over Membership Expansion

To effectively prioritize discipleship, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can implement several strategies that place spiritual growth at the heart of their ministries:

1. **Develop Comprehensive Discipleship Pathways**: Create structured discipleship pathways that guide members from initial faith exploration to deeper spiritual maturity. This could include new believer classes, spiritual growth seminars, and advanced theological training sessions that cater to different stages of a believer's journey.

2. **Emphasize Small Groups as Key Discipleship Hubs**: Small groups offer a space for believers to connect, share, and grow in their faith. By emphasizing small groups as vital discipleship environments, churches can create more intimate settings where members can study the Bible, pray together, and provide mutual support. These groups should be encouraged to focus on spiritual accountability and life application of Biblical teachings.
3. **Encourage Active Participation in Ministry**: Discipleship includes equipping believers to serve. Encouraging members to participate in various ministries not only helps the church function but also allows individuals to discover and use their spiritual gifts. Engaging in service deepens faith, builds community, and reinforces the practical aspects of discipleship.
4. **Regularly Evaluate the Spiritual Health of the Congregation**: Implement assessments that measure spiritual growth rather than just attendance or giving. Surveys, personal testimonies, and feedback sessions can provide insights into how well the church is fulfilling its mission to make disciples. This feedback can guide the development of future discipleship initiatives.
5. **Offer Spiritual Mentoring and Accountability Programs**: Establish formal mentoring programs where experienced members are paired with those seeking spiritual guidance. These relationships can provide a safe space for deeper conversations about faith, struggles, and personal growth, reinforcing the discipleship process.
6. **Host Retreats and Spiritual Formation Events**: Organize retreats, workshops, and spiritual formation events focused on deepening members' relationship with God. These immersive experiences allow participants to step away from daily distractions and focus on prayer, reflection, and spiritual renewal.
7. **Shift the Focus of Church Communications**: Ensure that church messaging emphasizes the value of spiritual growth, discipleship, and community impact over numerical growth. Highlight stories of personal transformation, acts of service, and testimonies of faith to inspire others and demonstrate what true discipleship looks like.

By implementing these strategies, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can embrace their calling to make disciples, aligning with the Great Commission. This focus not only fulfills Christ's command but also builds a spiritually vibrant and resilient community, where every member is equipped to live out their faith authentically. Prioritizing discipleship over filling pews will enable these churches to nurture believers who are deeply rooted in their faith, actively engaged in their spiritual journey, and fully committed to living out the teachings of Jesus.

Being the Light in Pittsburg: Restoring the Church's Witness

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:14-16 is a powerful reminder of the role of His followers in the world: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." This call to be a light emphasizes the responsibility of Christians to reflect God's love, truth, and goodness in a way that draws others to Him. For churches, being a light means actively engaging in their communities, demonstrating Christ's compassion, and standing as a beacon of hope and guidance.

Jesus' Call for His Followers to Be the Light of the World

Jesus' command to be the light of the world is more than a metaphor; it is an active directive that calls His followers to live in a way that visibly reflects the character of God. The imagery of light is significant—it represents guidance, hope, and the revelation of truth in the darkness. In the context of the church, this means that the actions, teachings, and outreach of a congregation should consistently point people toward God. A church's light shines brightest when it exemplifies Christ-like love, integrity, and service, embodying the values of the Gospel in every aspect of its ministry.

For Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church, being the light in Pittsburg means prioritizing actions that reveal God's love to the local community. It is about engaging in outreach that meets practical needs, offering spiritual

guidance, and providing a welcoming space for those seeking hope and connection. This approach contrasts sharply with any tendency to focus on internal growth, financial goals, or institutional success at the expense of outward ministry.

Reflection on How Financial Motivations Might Affect the Community's Perception of the Churches

When a church's activities appear driven by financial motivations, it can diminish its witness and weaken its impact on the community. While managing resources and maintaining facilities are necessary for any church, an overemphasis on financial aspects—such as frequent fundraising, building projects, or high-budget events—can lead to the perception that the church is more focused on material gain than spiritual transformation. This perception can erode trust and deter people from engaging with the church, especially those who are seeking genuine spiritual guidance or support.

In some cases, financial motivations can overshadow the church's primary mission of serving and loving others. For instance, when sermons frequently emphasize giving or when the church's messaging seems centered on financial needs, it can create a sense that the congregation is valued more for its monetary contributions than for its spiritual well-being. This can cause members and the broader community to question the authenticity of the church's mission, viewing it more as an organization driven by earthly concerns rather than a spiritual haven.

Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness Church must be mindful of how their financial practices and priorities are perceived, ensuring that their primary message always reflects Christ's call to be a light in the world. This involves regularly reassessing whether their actions align with their stated mission and making necessary adjustments to ensure that the focus remains on serving others and glorifying God.

Application: Encouraging Active Engagement in Local Outreach That Reflects Christ's Love and Truth

To restore and strengthen their witness in the Pittsburg community, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can take practical steps to actively

engage in outreach that clearly reflects the love and truth of Christ. Here are strategies they can implement:

1. **Prioritize Service-Oriented Outreach Programs**: Develop outreach initiatives that directly address the needs of the local community, such as food drives, support for the homeless, free counseling services, or educational programs. By meeting tangible needs, the church demonstrates Christ's compassion in action, providing practical help that points people to God's love.
2. **Engage in Partnerships with Local Organizations**: Collaborate with other community organizations, nonprofits, and local government programs to extend the church's reach and impact. By partnering with groups that share similar values, the church can pool resources and expertise to address broader community challenges, such as poverty, addiction, and mental health.
3. **Host Community Events Focused on Connection and Support**: Organize events that invite the community to connect with the church in non-threatening, supportive environments. Examples include family fun days, health fairs, or community dinners. These events provide opportunities for church members to build relationships with neighbors and share the Gospel through actions and conversations.
4. **Promote Transparent and Accountable Financial Practices**: Maintain openness about how church funds are being used, emphasizing transparency in all financial dealings. This not only builds trust within the congregation but also reinforces the church's commitment to integrity. Sharing stories of how financial contributions are making a direct impact on ministry and outreach helps connect giving with tangible outcomes.
5. **Highlight Acts of Service Over Fundraising Goals**: Shift the focus of church communications from financial needs to stories of service and impact. Regularly share testimonies of lives changed, families helped, and communities served, showing how the church is actively working to be the light of Christ. This narrative helps align the church's public image with its spiritual mission.

6. **Incorporate Community Service into Discipleship**: Encourage church members to view community service as an essential part of their discipleship journey. By integrating service into small groups, Bible studies, or youth programs, the church can cultivate a culture where serving others is seen as an act of worship and obedience to Christ.
7. **Engage in Public Advocacy and Social Justice**: Stand up for Biblical principles of justice, mercy, and compassion by engaging in public advocacy on issues affecting the community. Whether it's supporting local initiatives for the underserved, advocating for ethical practices, or raising awareness about social injustices, the church can be a voice of hope and truth in Pittsburg.

By embracing these strategies, Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church can more effectively embody Christ's call to be the light of the world. Their witness will shine brightest when their actions reflect God's love and truth, drawing others to Him through genuine service and compassionate outreach. As these churches actively engage with their community, they will fulfill their role as beacons of hope, demonstrating the transformative power of the Gospel in real and meaningful ways.

Conclusion

The mission and operations of Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church in Pittsburg, Kansas, must be firmly rooted in the Biblical principles of humility, service, and discipleship. As the teachings of Christ call His followers to live as the light of the world, so too are these churches called to reflect His love and truth within their community. By returning to these foundational values, both churches can realign their priorities, ensuring that their actions, programs, and outreach efforts authentically represent the Gospel.

The journey back to these Biblical principles requires a conscious commitment from both church leaders and members to engage in self-reflection and spiritual renewal. This process involves regularly evaluating the church's focus, questioning whether current practices align with Christ's teachings, and being open to change where needed. Church leaders should model humility and servanthood,

encouraging their congregations to follow suit, creating an environment where every decision is prayerfully considered and centered on God's will.

Self-reflection extends beyond leadership to every member of the church community. It is an invitation for individuals to examine their own spiritual lives, assess their contributions to the church's mission, and seek ways to serve more effectively. This personal renewal, coupled with the church's commitment to Biblical values, can transform Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness into dynamic, spiritually vibrant communities that actively make disciples, not just members.

Encouraging these churches to embrace their roles as beacons of Christ's teachings in Pittsburg means fostering a culture that prioritizes people over programs, spiritual growth over numerical expansion, and generous service over material gain. By focusing on discipleship, engaging in meaningful outreach, and demonstrating integrity in all operations, Covenant Harvest and Free Holiness can rebuild their witness as authentic, Christ-centered bodies of believers.

Ultimately, the goal is for Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church to become true reflections of Christ's love and light, serving their community with humility, grace, and a passion for the Gospel. As they embody these values, they will not only fulfill their mission but also inspire others to seek and glorify God, becoming the vibrant, transformative presence that Jesus envisioned His church to be.

References

This section provides a compilation of relevant Biblical passages and supplementary Christian teachings that underpin the core messages of this paper, guiding Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church in Pittsburg, Kansas, back to their foundational Biblical principles.

1. **Matthew 20:28 (NIV) - Humility and Servanthood**
    - "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
    - This verse emphasizes Jesus' model of servant leadership, encouraging churches to prioritize humility and service in their mission.
2. **Matthew 6:24 (NIV) - Warnings Against Wealth and Materialism**
    - "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."
    - This passage highlights the spiritual dangers of pursuing wealth and serves as a caution for churches to avoid financial motivations that conflict with their spiritual calling.
3. **1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV) - The Love of Money**
    - "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
    - This scripture warns against the temptations of financial gain and underscores the importance of prioritizing faith over material wealth.
4. **Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV) - Storing Treasures in Heaven**
    - "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven… For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

- These verses encourage the church to focus on eternal values rather than material success, guiding them to invest in spiritual impact over physical expansion.

5. **2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV) - Cheerful Giving**
    - "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
    - This passage sets the standard for generosity as an act of worship, calling churches to foster a culture of giving that reflects joy and voluntary participation.
6. **Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV) - The Great Commission**
    - "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
    - The Great Commission emphasizes the church's true mission to make disciples, placing spiritual mentoring and teaching at the heart of church activities.
7. **Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV) - Being the Light of the World**
    - "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden… let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."
    - This call for followers to be a light serves as a reminder for churches to engage actively in their communities, reflecting Christ's love and truth through their actions.
8. **Acts 2:44-45 (NIV) - The Early Church's Model of Generosity and Community**
    - "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."

- This account of the early church illustrates the Biblical model of communal support and generosity, demonstrating a focus on shared resources and mutual care.

9. **Mark 12:41-44 (NIV) - The Widow's Offering**
    - "But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents… Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others."
    - Jesus' commendation of the widow's sacrificial giving underscores that the value of generosity lies in the heart behind the gift, not the amount.
10. **Supplementary Christian Teachings**
    - Works such as "The Cost of Discipleship" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer highlight the importance of genuine discipleship and the cost of following Christ, reinforcing the need for churches to focus on spiritual depth rather than superficial growth.
    - "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster explores various spiritual disciplines, including service and giving, encouraging churches to cultivate environments that foster spiritual growth and reflection.
    - "Generous Justice" by Timothy Keller emphasizes the Biblical mandate for social justice and mercy, urging churches to engage in community service and outreach as reflections of God's love.

These references collectively provide a strong Biblical foundation and practical guidance for Covenant Harvest Church and Free Holiness Church as they seek to realign with their spiritual mission. By grounding their operations and priorities in these teachings, both churches can ensure that their efforts reflect the true heart of the Gospel, becoming beacons of Christ's love and truth in the Pittsburg community.

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